

University Academic Affairs Committee
Approved Minutes

March 25, 2024

Committee: Gonzalo Campos-Dintrans (secretary), Marcelo Fajardo-Cárdenas, Varun Makhija (chair), Scott Powers, Kelly Yoon

Ex officio: Ana Chichester (absent), Kristen Fairbanks

Student representatives: Evan Fletcher (absent), Chase Sullivan (absent)

Meeting was called to order at 3:32.

Kristen reported admissions data that included number of applications, deposits and registrations from 2021 to 2024. The committee discussed the numbers and discussed several points. Part of the discussion was on the comparison between graduation, application and deposits, and it was suggested that not all numbers were fully comparable, especially considering pre—pandemic data. Another issue that makes the data harder to interpret is the amount of time that BLS students take to graduate since they register. While some students may finish in one or two years, others leave the program and come back in a few years, or even a decade. This fact makes it difficult to establish comparisons, and it has to do with the varied set of circumstances for BLS students. A question was also raised about the validity of graduating with a major having taking classes over a decade ago, especially in certain areas that are more susceptible to develop in a few years. In these few cases, the fact that BLS students build their special major with the help of a faculty member, and that this is further revised by the committee on a case-by-case basis, helps keep the major updated.

During the discussion, it was also discussed that pre-pandemic data might not be very comparable, and that only in the following years we might be able to see more definitive trends. Another suggestion during the discussion was to examine and report these numbers periodically (once a year), and to also include how long students take to graduate, so that we could have a clearer profile of the program. There was general agreement that the BLS population has distinct graduation and enrollment patterns from traditional UMW students, and that examining these numbers was valuable. Finally, a question was raised about how students learn about the BLS program. Some of them do through billboards, and many of them live in the area, so they are aware of the program.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10